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DAKAR PLS PASS ODC AND DAO

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TAGS: PREL MOPS AU GA SO

SUBJECT: THE GAMBIA: POSSIBLE TCC FOR AU PEACEKEEPING
MISSION TO SOMALIA

REF: ADDIS ABABA 23

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOSEPH STAFFORD, REASON 1.4 (B AND D)

1.(C) We note that, in reftel report of Ambassador Courville's January 1 meeting with AU PSC Commissioner Djinnit, he mentioned The Gambia as a possible Troop Contributing Country (TCC) for an AU peacekeeping mission to Somalia. The Gambian armed forces have a well-established record of participation in international and regional peacekeeping operations, and we believe that the GOTG would likely be amenable in principle to contributing troops for such a mission to Somalia.

¶2. (C) However, we also believe that the GOTG would be hard-pressed to provide the 500 troops suggested by Djinnit; this number represents about half of The Gambia's tiny military force, which consists essentially of two battalions.

Moreover, the GOTG currently has a 196-troop contingent in Darfur and has indicated a willingness to consider increasing that contingent to a battalion, if so requested by the AU/UN.

¶3. (C) Nonetheless, the GOTG doubtless remains keen to burnish its foreign peacekeeping credentials -- and garner the attendant financial benefit for its forces -- and hence might well be prepared to supply some troops for a Somalia mission, although probably less than 500.

STAFFORD